



CITY OF BRAWLEY

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
400 MAIN ST. - PLAZA PARK
BRAWLEY, CALIFORNIA 92227
PHONE: (760) 344-8822
FAX: (760) 344-0907

January 18, 2008

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
383 Main Street
Brawley, CA 92227

Subject: Annual Planning Report and Status of the General Plan for the Year 2007

Dear Council Members:

California planning law requires that each City prepare an annual report to its legislative body on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation. The Planning Department herewith respectfully submits the 2007 Annual Report and the Status of the General Plan.

The purpose of the report is to ensure that the General Plan directs all land use decisions and remains an effective guide for future development. The report is also used to provide the City Council and Planning Commission with information regarding implementation of the General Plan. The Planning Department is currently in the process of updating the General Plan with adoption anticipated sometime around June 2008. I encourage full participation by the City Council, the Planning Commission, all City departments, and most importantly the citizens of Brawley.

The annual report also explains the status of the plan and progress in its implementation, including the progress in meeting the City's share of regional housing needs determined pursuant to Section 65584 of the Government Code and the City's efforts to remove constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing pursuant to Paragraph (3) of Subdivision (c) of Section 65583 of the Government Code.

Please call 344-8822 for further information or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Gordon R. Gaste, AICP
Planning Director

cc: Office of Planning and Research
Department of Housing and Community Development
Planning Commission
City Manager
City Clerk
Department Heads

HOUSING POLICY
DEVELOPMENT, HCD

HOUSING POLICY
DEVELOPMENT, HCD

JAN 28 2008

CITY OF BRAWLEY
ANNUAL PLANNING REPORT
AND
STATUS OF THE GENERAL PLAN
2007

Submitted To: City of Brawley City Council
383 Main Street
Brawley, California 92227

City of Brawley Planning Commission
400 Main Street
Suite 2
Brawley, California 92227

Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, California 95812-3044

Department of Housing and Community Development
Housing Policy Division
1800 Third Street, Room 430
Sacramento, California 95814

Prepared By: City of Brawley Planning Department
400 Main Street
Suite 2
Brawley, California 92227

Date Submitted: January 18, 2008

2007 Annual Planning Report and Status of the General Plan

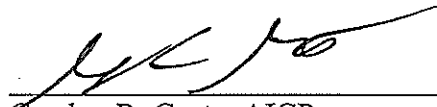
- I. Executive Summary
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- IV. Planning Commission Role and Responsibility
- V. Development Review Committee
- VI. Planning Department Role and Responsibility
- VII. Land Use Permits
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The annual planning report and status of the General Plan for the calendar year 2007 is hereby submitted to the City of Brawley City Council, Planning Commission, and State Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

During the 2007 Calendar Year, the staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council addressed a variety of challenging and progressive land-use related projects and/or issues. Unprecedented growth is still occurring in the City, however applications for new residential entitlements has slowed somewhat. Following the major influx of residential projects, commercial development is still on the rise.

As Director of the Planning Department, I sincerely thank the City Council and the Planning Commission for their assistance and support in my sixth full year with the City of Brawley. A sincere thank you is also given to the staff of the Planning Department, Building Department, and Public Works Department for their coordination and assistance in carrying out the year's projects. A particular thank you is also given to the members of the Development Review Committee (DRC) for working with the Planning Department on all the projects listed herein.



Gordon R. Gaste, AICP
Planning Director

II. CITY OF BRAWLEY OVERVIEW

The City of Brawley, incorporated April 6, 1908, is located in the southeast corner of the state of California, in the agriculturally rich Imperial Valley.

Brawley is located 210 miles southeast of Los Angeles, 290 miles southwest of Las Vegas, Nevada, 120 miles east of San Diego, 60 miles west of Yuma, Arizona, and 23 miles north of Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico.

Brawley's climate is characterized as arid with hot summers and mild winters. The City lies 113 feet below sea level and receives approximately 3 inches of rain per year. The average annual temperature is 73.2 degrees. Brawley also has more days of sunshine per year than San Diego making the area ideal for outdoor recreation.

Brawley's 2005 census population figures estimate 25,694 residents. The City encompasses 7.538 square miles giving the city a population density of 3,409 persons per square mile.

III. CITY COUNCIL ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The City of Brawley is a General Law City operating under the laws of the State of California. There are five (5) Council members elected at large who serve four-year terms. This Council is the community legislative body. It sets policy, approves the budget, and determines tax rates.

2008 Brawley City Council

John Benson (Mayor)
Don C. Campbell
George Nava
Ryan Kelley
Steve Vasquez

IV. PLANNING COMMISSION ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

California Government Code, Section 65101, authorizes the creation of a Planning Commission by the City Council. The Planning Commission consists of seven (7) members, appointed by City Council for a term of four years.

One of the Planning Commission's primary roles is to prepare, and recommend to the City Council, a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the City. The Planning Commission also rules on matters from individual citizens pertaining to the enforcement of zoning.

2007 Brawley Planning Commission

Ernest Dean (Chairman)

R.C. Valenzuela

Eugene Bumbera

Tony Gallegos

Robert L. Noriega

Thomas Rutherford

James Stiff

V. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Development Review Committee (DRC) is a decision-making body that consists of seven (7) voting members representing the following departments:

- Planning
- Building Department
- Community & Economic Development Department
- Public Works
- Police
- Fire
- Parks and Recreation

The Committee also consists of twelve (12) advisory members representing the following departments/agencies:

- Finance
- Personnel/Risk Management
- Library
- Water and Wastewater
- Imperial Irrigation District
- Southern California Gas Company
- Time/Warner Communications
- SBC
- Brawley Union High School District
- Brawley Elementary School District
- Brawley Airport Advisory Commission
- California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS)
- County of Imperial (LAFCO/ALUC/Planning)

The Department Heads serve on the committee or may choose alternates to represent their departments.

The role of the DRC is to make decisions on projects subject to CEQA and projects requiring close coordination with other agencies. It also approves site plans not requiring a zone change, general plan amendment, conditional use permit, or variance.

VI. PLANNING DEPARTMENT ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Planning is an approach to problem solving, a process to formulate future plans and ordinances, ensuring full public participation, and providing all advisory bodies (e.g., Planning Commission) and the legislative body (City Council) with the necessary information to make intelligent and informed decisions.

Through the California Constitution, the State has delegated the responsibility of implementing local policies and development to each City through the City General Plan.

Some of the specific functions of the Planning Department are to revise the General Plan, made up of seven (7) mandatory elements and one (1) optional element, review of specific plans, amending the General Plan, keeping the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances current through amendments thereto, handling Conditional Use Permits, Specific Plans, Zone Changes, Variances, Major/Minor Subdivisions (Tract Maps/Parcel Maps), Site Plans, Adjustment Plats (Lot Line Adjustments, Lot Mergers) and Certificates of Compliance among others. The Planning Department also works with other city departments providing administrative and technical assistance with their projects.

One of the necessary functions of the review for any project submitted to the Planning Department is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) application. Through the preparation of an "Initial Study", the City determines whether or not a particular project may create a significant impact on the environment.

Policies of the General Plan and city ordinances must be consistently applied across the board without regard as to who the applicant is and what the project may be.

Planning Department Staff

Gordon R. Gaste, AICP, Planning Director
Cresencia Ibarra, Administrative Secretary

VII. LAND USE PERMITS

The City of Brawley processed a significant amount of land use applications. The last five years have seen a considerable increase in the number of projects. However, this year is the first time in five years there have been less applications than in the previous years.

Below are brief definitions of the various permits, standard procedures, and the number of permits processed during the 2007 Calendar Year. The definitions are not comprehensive; therefore, they should only be used as a reference.

Subdivision: Generally, a subdivision is any division of land for the purpose of sale, lease, or financing and is governed by the State Subdivision Map Act (Government Code, Section 66410).

Major Subdivision: With a few exceptions, a major subdivision is the division of five or more lots. During the 2007 Calendar Year, the Planning Department processed 4 Major Subdivision applications.

Minor Subdivision: A minor subdivision consisting of four or fewer parcels that requires a parcel map. During the 2007 Calendar Year, the Planning Department processed 1 Minor Subdivision applications.

Zone Change: Zoning is a state-mandated requirement and all properties within the City are classified into various zones or "zoning districts." Zoning regulations establish groups of permitted uses that vary from district to district. If a property owner desires to conduct a land use upon his property that is not permitted in the existing zoning district, he or she may apply for a Zone Change. During the 2007 Calendar Year, the Planning Department processed 5 Zone Change applications.

Conditional Use Permit: A procedure established whereby an applicant can request a certain land use to be permitted in an area in which it is not usually permitted by the Zoning Ordinance, and where such uses are deemed essential or desirable to the public convenience and welfare, and are compatible with the various elements or objectives of the General Plan. During the 2007 Calendar Year, the Planning Department processed 5 Conditional Use Permit applications.

Variance: A procedure established by state law and the ordinances of the City of Brawley whereby an applicant can request a deviation from the provisions of the minimum property development standards established relating to building height, lot area, structural coverage, building set backs, or accessory structures (e.g., carports, signs). During the 2007 Calendar Year, the Planning Department processed 12 Variance applications.

Adjustment Plat: Lot Line Adjustment and Lot Merger. These are required to adjust property lines between adjacent parcels when no new parcels are created. During the 2007 Calendar Year, the Planning Department processed 5 Adjustment Plat applications.

General Plan Amendment: During the 2007 Calendar Year, the Planning Department processed 3 General Plan Amendment applications.

Site Plan Review: A procedure for review of site-specific requirements for a project. A site plan review may be an ordained requirement or mandated by a condition of approval. During the 2007 Calendar Year, the Planning Department processed 6 Site Plan Review applications.

Cumulatively, the Planning Department processed 41 land use permit applications for the 2007 Calendar Year. This is still a significant number considering the size of the City and growth continues. Although other cities of comparable size typically have a staff of four to six for their Planning Departments, all applications have been processed within the timelines required by law with a staff of only two.

VIII. THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

The City of Brawley, in 1995, prepared a revised General Plan that serves to guide future development. The Housing Element was updated in 2001 and is being implemented to achieve the regional housing needs.

The objective of the General Plan is to promote orderly growth and development and to maintain and improve the kind of environment that makes Brawley an excellent place to live, work, and enjoy leisure time. The General Plan contains information on the physical, economic, and social environment of Brawley.

The California Government Code requires that the plan be long-term, clearly written, comprehensive, and the policies of the plan must be internally consistent.

The City of Brawley General Plan is an official statement by the City Council. It can be viewed as the constitution for the City's physical development, for the protection of the environment, and for the enhancement of the quality of life in Brawley. It is used by the Planning Commission and City Council to support their decisions on major land use, zoning, and future public/private projects. The General Plan policies and programs shall also provide information and guidance to the general public. In context, the General Plan addresses the following mandatory plans and other optional elements:

- Land Use Element
- Infrastructure Element
- Resource Management Element
- Open Space/Recreation Element
- Public Safety/Noise Element
- Economic Development Element
- Housing Element
- Implementation Element

The General Plan is currently being revised with adoption expected sometime in mid 2008.

The City's new Service Area Plan (SAP) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) were adopted by the Imperial County Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO) on December 14, 2006.

HOUSING ELEMENT PROGRESS

The Housing Element is being prepared by a consultant and will be adopted prior to June 30, 2008. The required figures will be forwarded to the Office of Planning and Research and the Department of Housing and Community Development when the document is available.